SPIRITUAL LETTERS

Mrs. P. L. UPHAM

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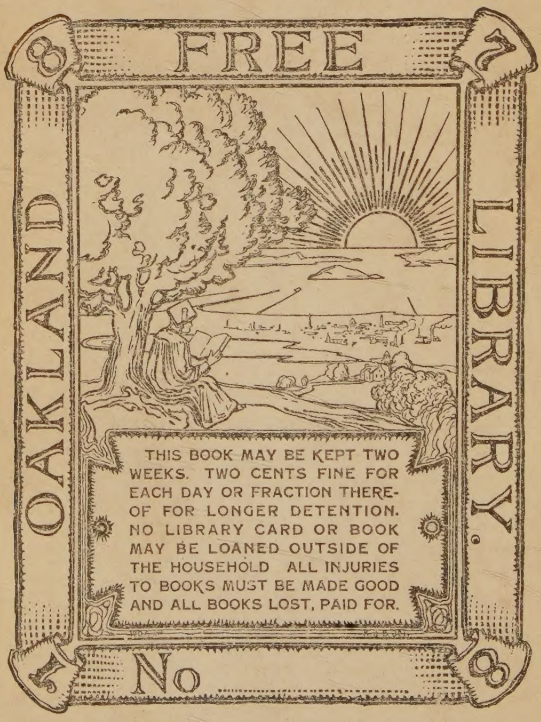
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SPIRITUAL LETTERS

WRITTEN BY

MRS. P. L. UPHAM

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JUN 1930
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PHILADELPHIA
George W. McCalla
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1915

PREFATORY NOTE.

These private, personal leters, written without a thought of ever being published, are now given to the Church in their imperfectness, under an impression that such is the mind of the Spirit. But in the certain knowledge that whoever puts his hand in God's hand is led forth step by step, from strength to strength, from grace to glory.

PHOEBE LORD UPHAM.

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Spiritual Letters

I.

Desires which come from God.

The desires which come to us from God, or which He gives us, have an *eternal* duration: or, are ever in the process of being fulfilled; and are never so fully satisfied, as to leave no room for increase; or rather, nothing prospective or additional to our present enlargement and progress.

Receiving our desires from God, we wait His time for their fulfillment. Thus holy desires are disciplinary, and controlled by a Wisdom beyond the wisdom of the finite mind. God nourishes in us a desire, to be accomplished in the divine order of events: in the fullness of time, or when *the* time comes.

All summer I have been dwelling on the one clause or petition of our Lord's

prayer: "*Thy* will be done in us!" Called to lead our family devotions (my good husband being too ill to do so), all my thoughts and expressions seemed to rally around and proceed from *this* one point. And I am learning, more and more, the beauty and depth of the petition, in relation to the children of the kingdom leading us to a state in which there is *no petition* (as it must be in heaven with the angels) but only acquiescence in God's *manifested* will. He cares for us.

How beautiful must be the order of the celestial city controlled by Infinite Wisdom and Love. Love without wisdom or love independent of wisdom to regulate its exercise would soon be shorn of its beauty.

In the *celestial* state all is developed in the Divine order; and therefore as will best subserve men's happiness and the glory of God. I thank God for all the manifestations of His will to me and particularly I might say in the *way of discipline;* for I see so much need of this in my own case.

Heaven *within* has opened very rapturously of late and were not these views accompanied with some degree of discipline my development would not be healthful and safe being still a resident in the earth-body. I see the beauty of crosses and disappointments as never before; and I am happy to say that I see *so much* beauty in them or so much benefit accruing from them that I am led to adore God more and more on account of them. It is thus I am progressing, *seeing* God more fully in *all* things; and in this light, resigning myself more readily to His teachings and leadings.

Receiving all *from* Him, and returning all to Him with a loving, grateful heart, I am becoming a child *at home* in my Father's house.

II.

Holy love tried.

Every experience our Lord gives us, or, in other words, all our inward states, read us a lesson of progress. During the time I am passing through a *new* experience, the way is comparatively dark; that is, I do not understand the lesson; but subsequently it is made clear. Paul says: "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." He is raising us up a spiritual temple, and is perfecting His work in teaching us new lessons, and lessons in every progressive stage.

In this, my last stage of progress, which reaches beyond any previous experience regarding perfectness, or wholeness of being, the lessons, though dark at the time, have ultimately been well defined and clear.

God changes the current of our thoughts and emotions at any moment He pleases. His will is supreme, and subjection to this will is beyond any other state. He may bring us into the closest

relations with each other, and show us the delights of friendship, but if this love becomes engrossing, He will chasten and temper it. It must be regulated with a regard to God's glory and our best good, otherwise it will degenerate into self-indulgence, and become a snare.

Even love, then, pure, holy love, such as saints in heaven enjoy, is liable to perversion, unless God watches over and controls it.

This He will do, this He does for all who submit to His discipline. In this furnace, where the most tender chords are touched, our faith may be tried to the uttermost; but the dross only will be consumed. The highest love, the purest, and that which God most delights to give His children, in their united capacity, is limited in the order of God, and subject to His control. Thus we are always and forever, dependent children, dependent on Infinite Wisdom and Love, however exalted our state of grace, whatever heights and depths of holy love we may reach.

III.

Unreserved Submission.

I can speak of *progress* in the Divine Life all the way along for many years; and especially of clearer light, unfolding the written Word *experimentally;* and of a Divine Presence and Power sustaining and comforting me in the time of trial, enabling me to hold on when the way was dark.

But I have reached no state exempt from discipline. I have never really receded from any point reached, although I have had many fluctuations, before I became fully established in any new view presented to me. And the new view, or experience, reached in January, 1870, giving me a knowledge of *what Heaven is.* has not passed away; it is only more and more substantiated; and yet is accompanied by much discipline.

The higher the reach of joy, the greater is the discipline, unless the soul yields promptly to the will of God manifested in a change of state. God holds the soul

to an implicit yielding to the manifestation of His will, at the *present moment.* The lesson of *unreserved submission* is the first, the continuous, and last lesson, I was about to add, of the finite mind. A child in order to be right, must be governed by the parent; and there is the same necessity regarding the child of God, only to an increased and positive degree.

I am led to inquire whether the same disciplinary state, or a state in which submission must be called into exercise, will not continue after we have left the external form? God's thoughts and ways will be far above the thoughts and ways of man; therefore, must not discipline be continued in Heaven, or will there not be occasion for the continued exercise of faith? Perhaps the discipline will be less, as we apprehend God more fully in our interior. Daily, hourly, and momentary submission is the lesson still presented to me, and whether I shall ever learn it in this state of being, so fully as not to know any disappointment, is the query now arising in my mind.

IV.

The God-given now.

My soul is now dwelling in an even place—no *internal* conflicts. I am living in the *"Eternal Now"*—God's moment—and remembering that this *"eternal now"* covers every moment of my existence, I am apprehending that God is Love, and Love is Life, in heaven, in the unity of souls in Him.

I perceive that the cause of unrest is the activity of the natural man, which, being subdued, a superior power pervades and controls the interior. When the natural self-life dies to its own activities, giving up all clinging to the creaturely movements, then the Divine thought and perception takes its place; and thus the way is opened for the soul to progress in knowledge, in power, in blessedness.

While we remain on the natural plane, or cling to any exercises that are pleasing to the pride of man, there is room for our spiritual co-partners, dwelling on the

same plane—sympathizing spirits, to minister to our fancies, or self-love operating in any way, and thus strengthening what must die within us. All these flights of the imagination must fall before the brighter manifestation of the Truth in our interior.

To realize with Christ, when Satan cometh he findeth nothing in me, is to reach the divine in man. In such a soul, the Christ-power, or Spirit, or Life, is living, or operative. We are no longer ensnared by evil, nor overcome by it, in any of its forms.

One may cling to the gifts and graces of the Spirit, in the way of self-appropriation and exultation, and thus greatly hinder the death of the self-life. Let go all; cling to nothing but God; the present manifested *will* of God.

The God-given *now,* is the only standpoint for the advancing Christian, his *everlasting* standpoint. The finite must yield to the Infinite, in order to dwell in God. God cannot come in and dwell in the narrow boundary of the creature's apprehension. He comes to enlarge that

boundary, and fill it with Himself, in His own orderly way.

We know that the eternal life is flowing on, and will find us farther advanced each succeeding day, while we live in God's will; which will is the smile of His love, beaming upon us in blessedness unexpressible in any words we can utter.

V.

Discipline does not necessarily imply sin.

The discipline the child of God receives, implies imperfection of being, but not necessarily sin. The object of discipline is to perfect and establish the soul in the will of God. A finite being cannot perfect itself. It grows, or expands in part, by a thwarting of its inclinations, which inclinations, if indulged beyond a due degree, retard the soul's progress. It is a love which constitutes the bliss of the heavenly state. While those in the closest union, by the order of God, are never really separated, the overflowing of heart into heart, is subject to wise ordering.

There are states of listlessness, or passive states in heaven, which come at unlooked-for moments. There is no order apparent, as in the succession of day and night; but there is as much order and symmetry in the heavenly state as there is in the motion of the heavenly bodies. Yes, the holy, or heavenly state is subject

to law; and the holy soul sees and apprehends the beauty, which governs its mental and operating states. This knowledge relieves the soul from any burden or anxiety, or sorrow, or suffering. God's laws are everywhere seen and acknowledged and admired.

The laws of the heavenly state are very perfect and unyielding; the least violation produces a disturbance in the inner and outer man; so that great flexibility, or readiness to yield, is necessary to the enjoyment of the heavenly state. It takes time to sweep away old prejudices and habits. Thus happiness is not perfected at once, and consequently there must be more or less suffering, according to the state of the individual. In the highest state, when the soul has become familiar with the laws of heaven, there is no suffering. Each desire of the soul is gratified. In the present condition of the world there is a vast difference between the heaven of heavens and the heaven on earth, or, in the earth-body. The physical or external suffers much. There is suffering from a deprivation of what the

soul in its enlarged capacity needs. And for all these states of suffering on earth, there is no perfect remedy. Submission is the best cure. It requires an advanced stage of progress, to welcome suffering.

Let no one be disheartened, who shrinks, consciously, from suffering. Nature still cries out: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but grace enables it to add: "Not my will, but thine be done." And grace will triumph in each believing soul. The Christ, incarnate, suffered; but all suffering was at an end, when the human expired on the cross. All advancing souls suffer more or less, until perfected in their inward state, and in their external, relative condition. But not one such soul is left uncared for by the watchful eye of Omnipotent Love.

VI.

A haven of rest.

In several dreams of late, or night visions, I have had presented to my view a beautiful harbor, a broad Haven of Rest. Scattered all along were little barks safely anchored, and the bay of shallow water all unruffled. So it is with me now. Those disturbing influences are all removed. God has brought order out of confusion, separating the chaff from the wheat; giving me to know what is of Himself and what comes from other minds and spirits. Thus I am drawing nearer to heaven than ever before.

All those extraneous influences which have so much perplexed me, and for so long a time, have been removed, I trust afar off, and never to return. To see clearly, to have my position defined, and to know that all is right, has been the one desire of my soul. But it has pleased God to lead me in a way I could not understand—*a very dark* way—and thus try my faith to the uttermost; for at

times, I have come nigh to sinking. Thank God this has not been permitted.

After having encountered many storms, I am at last in the *haven of rest.* The Word within me says: "It is finished!" My precipitancy, my weakness of faith, and fear of evil, and desire to understand each step of the way, has been terribly smitten and ground to powder. And now (shall I not say it), I am the pure bride of my loving Lord, and shall accomplish all His will. I shall be made fruitful in His way and will, hearkening to His voice and His alone.

As the bow in the heavens is the brightness of our being allied to the infinite All in All, as all the beauties of color combine and form a central arch around the earth, so are we the sons and daughters of the Lord, beautifully enshrouded in the Presence of the All in All, radiant with His own blessed Life, which Life no words can paint, but which is shadowed forth in the most beautiful works of the heavens—the sun, the moon, the stars, the rainbow—which all shine in stillness, and are accomplishing so much, because wholly of God.

VII.

The ego must die.

Never was I so ready to bid good-bye to the old year as now—a year of unusual discipline for me. I was obtaining some victories, and inspired with the hope and expectation of soon reaching elevated ground. Instead of this, I found myself the subject of severer discipline than ever before.

Self, sinful self, being at least measurably subdued, I was not anticipating what I considered the subjugation of the higher self, or holy love—God-given love! I cannot define my state, except as a state of wretchedness, for lack of resignation to the strangeness of my state. I could not comprehend it at all. I always desired to understand all about God's dealings with me, but He orders otherwise. I must exercise faith in the dark.

The lesson taught me by being cast into such a deep pit is this, that none but God rules in heaven. The moment *the ego*—the I—aserts its claim and takes the

leadership, that moment it is plunged into misery. In certain conditions or stages of progress rebellion is unmistakably hell!

This teaching is very close, very real: "I AM, and there is none else besides Me." Oh, to what straits must the soul be reduced to learn this lesson fully! And none but God can teach it.

He alone, who created, can *uncreate*, or reduce the soul to nothingness, taking away all knowledge, light, power and self-support; leaving the soul which was ours, or so claimed by us, an atom floating in God's universe; and making no resistance whatever currents, swift or slow, warm or cold, move it forward or delay it, perchance, in some deep mud-hole. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come." Thus it is with me. All is dark on the human side. I see nothing to cling to; *my* light, or what I called light, goes out in darkness. God's thoughts and ways are far above man's thoughts and ways, and to blot out our

high notions, so long fed and nourished, leaves an appalling blank in our souls—"darkness over all the earth."

This is a picture of my state for months past, yet irradiated at times by clear light. God's light manifesting itself through the darkness, and strengthening my soul to look alone to God.

I am the Lord's in darkness and in the light, in joy and in sorrow, and it brings me nearer to Himself that I pass through these severe scourgings of the pride of the natural man.

VIII.

Divine Life unfolding.

A great change, and one involving heavy crucifixions, must come over one who passes from the natural or mixed state to the spiritual. And this change in my own case has been somewhat protracted. For nearly two years I have been at times under the cloud; my experiences involving severe discipline because not understood. Previous to this, I had been sailing many years on a smooth sea, comparatively at least, so it seems to me now.

But while the discipline of late has been severe, there have been intermingled ecstatic joys, betokening heavenly blessedness in store for the soul.

In each individual case, the fiery trial which consumes the all of selfishness will be adjusted to the state or needs of the soul; the tender point, the stronghold must be reached, the false opinion, the wrong conception crushed. There must be a basis for truth, before the Christ-

life can take full possession; and with some of us, it is a fearful overturning of opinions we considered most sacred and true.

For a long time there is a mixture of truth and error, but there comes a period of progress when all error, fundamental to the soul's progress, must be removed, or one must stand without the gate of the Holy City. Oh, what upheavings of the soul, what terrible convulsions take place before the Christ-life takes full possession.

In the presence of our Lord, and with our Lord, amidst the glories of heaven, we survey ourselves no more; we let all go as darkness, and weakness, and folly. The old man is dead, or if it seems to revive, it is no longer regarded; it is as something past and not belonging to us; and even the conception of it is fading away, as the dreams of childhood are forgotten by the man.

O innocence! O purity! O bliss! O Christ! We live in the Garden of Eden, in the Paradise of God, the home of the soul, which Infinite Love has pre-

pared for us. We are new-created in the image and likeness of God, with powers and capacities continually unfolding in the clear light of truth, of beauty. O blessed, blessed, blessed being!

It seems to me nearly impossible to express what I do not clearly understand myself, namely, how it is that so great a change takes place consciously in the soul, and yet the soul remains unchanged as to individuality and natural characteristics.

There is a substance (parasite), which exists only on another substance; and yet has form and qualities peculiar to itself. So my soul now lives *on* God, and *of* God, and yet maintains a sense of its weakness, dependence, finiteness. It has taken wings which spread or fold themselves, as the will of God determines. The soul being in and of God, sees before it boundless being in Himself, apprehending God All in All. Here is the perfection of being! How my soul loves to lose itself, and know itself no more as formerly, a separate existence from God the Father, God the Son.

IX.

Know thyself.

The experiences or successive states through which I passed, and am passing, from the commencement of my more interior perception of God to the present time, find me and leave me in the one state of entire dependence on and subjection to God—the human being subject to the frailties of the human, to a greater or less degree, as God permits; that is, I do not reach a position where the human is lost permanently in the Divine. There is victory, when God gives it, over the human, and only at such times. Therefore I remain in the natural, not under bondage to sin by any means; the sinful *I* is slain, but the Ego of the natural man in what pertains to human weakness and frailty, is still operative, more or less. Will the human always *remain* in this sense, is a question I cannot answer; but to some extent, I think it will; that is, I believe as created and finite beings we must always

maintain a knowledge of our relative position towards God as the Supreme, and live and act only in and of Him.

As the body has its limits in the world, so has the spiritual body in the realm of perception and thought. I want so to understand my position as not to be cast down too much by fear, or sorrow, or bodily suffering, or anything that takes place regarding myself or others, ever remembering the necessity or naturalness of all things as occurring in the order of God's laws of finite being.

In order to be measurably at rest, we want to reach the true point of observation, *God's standpoint* in these matters, and thus float on in the ever-varying currents of life, looking stedfastly towards God, and receiving each and every breeze alike from Him, be it high or low.

X.

A Severe Test.

There is one fact of my experience which above all others I would like to record, excepting always the fact of having found Christ a personal, present Saviour. And the fact is this: The blindness of the way I have been led, in the more advanced experiences, so contrary to my natural perception of things, judging from the human standpoint.

For many years all was clear to my understanding and directly confirmed by the Word and by the Spirit; but when I came to the knowledge of "unspeakable things," "not expedient to utter," I stumbled, and thus was delayed in the way of progress.

In some way, God tries our faith to the uttermost, and to each one, perhaps, in a way peculiar to himself, just suited to his own case.

My trial was to me the greatest I could conceive of, but by the power of the Spirit upon me, I surrendered for the

Lord's sake, or at the Lord's demand. It was as close a trial as the call of Abraham to slay his son. Like him, I yielded, and the phantom, shall I call it? no, the reality of the thing, as in his case, was enacted only in my spirit. The Angel of His Presence said: "It is enough," and I, that is, my will, was slain.

It has ever been a difficult thing for me to submit my judgment, my reason, and understanding of things from a human standpoint; not clearly apprehending God in all things concerning me.

It must ever be remembered, there are two kingdoms; the kingdom of earth, and the kingdom of heaven, and the laws which govern each are not in all respects the same. This statement is easily admitted, *intellectually;* but *practically*, in some cases, it becomes a severe test of our allegiance to God—to God alone as Governor of His universe, as Lord over His creatures.

And just here I would bear testimony to the help I have received, all along the way, by personal interviews with some

brother or sister. Sometimes, in defiance of my previous conceptions, I call such persons angel messengers, sent of God to give me by hand just the bread I needed, and thus it became tangible. I ate it, and it nourished me.

XI.

Oneness with God's Will.

I am becoming quite reconciled to be "a worm and no man." I have been thinking a good deal of *entering heaven,* or reaching a fixed state, well defined, permanent and blessed, according to my view. But whatever progress I make, I do not find the heaven which my imagination painted. And at each advancing step I have to fall back on the same broad platform which all the Christian world accepts, but where few maintain unwaveringly a settled, undisturbed foothold, always saying, "Thy will, O God, not mine be done." I now find experimentally and graphically, that God is the King of his own Kingdom; and whatever false views are cherished by man regarding this kingdom, they cannot pass current with God.

The only wonder to me now, or the greatest wonder is that I can ever be made ready for *God's* heaven. Just now I seem to prefer God's will to my

own; but other days will bring other tests, and I am quite sure I am not in heaven when I am not wholly submissive to God's manifested will in me, and the tests are very severe at times. It is necessary, for some at least of God's children to be *swamped,* to be in the mire where there is no standing. I have been there, and have been lifted out. Let none despair.

The way of the advancing Christian, it seems to me, is deeper and deeper down, and higher and higher up, and one never reaches a state or experience which additional light does not improve in some way. And as far as my experience goes, the heaven that one reaches in the earth body has an adaptation to some extent, to the earth plane and its surroundings, but not as man appoints. I am of the opinion that the bitter and the sweet, the likes and dislikes, do not cease to operate even when one has passed the boundary of sinful self, and has found a new and enlarged existence, or indwelling in God and He in us. I will only add: I am learning more and more of the heights and depths of that love of the Father which trains a soul for heaven.

XII.

Very Close Dealings.

To such as have yielded themselves wholly to the Lord, His dealings with them are very close. But these dealings are not to be judged from the human standpoint. The ways God takes with His child are folly to the eye of the natural mind. And in some sense we cannot judge ourselves, or, in other words, it is not easy to balance at all times the human and the divine, and act approvingly to ourselves. But the judgment of God, or the divine conscience, and not the human, must be the order of the celestial life, otherwise the suffering which results from perceived separation from God must be the result. Suffering comes with any deviation from God's will. In *His* kingdom God rules, because His will and way is perfect, and to be led in the right way is to be led by Him. The discipline and suffering is in proportion to the depth of the wrong to be corrected. It means a great deal to

become so truly a child of God as to drink passively the bitter cup, and lose all caste on the natural plane, to be buffeted and scourged as Christ was, and as the Christ is, and will be when He manifests Himself again on earth, in the persons of His disciples, those who fully bear His image. And yet the divine consolations outweigh the sufferings, which sufferings have relation only to the human side, and the joy to the divine; and as God is greater than man, so the joys of the divine outweigh the sorrows of the human. Thus there is compensation in suffering. At present it is an hour of discipline with me, regarding my external relations with the world. A kind of discipline of which I cannot speak, and where no human aid can bring relief. I have watched the course of discipline all along my Christian life. The discipline always comes in some unexpected way, and never finds me ready to meet it without some suffering, some questioning, some delay, before I fully understand the lesson. I have often admired the long suffering patience of my Lord. It sometimes seems to me

that no one follows the path of life so hesitatingly as I do. I need to see the face of my Guide continually, and to know that I am right before I tread in a new path. It must be that doubt and fear are inwrought into the very structure and constitution of my mind, and my highest faith in God does not so obscure the human view as to leave me without questioning, without shrinkings. when a new and hidden truth is presented to me. The cross still goes before me in every ascending path, and yet nobody knows it, no one sees it, but it is, and I bear it alone. Not until the hour of ascension when Jesus said: "It is finished," did He lay it down, and it is enough that the disciple be as his Lord. I am looking forward to a time when I shall see every step so clearly in the light of God as to have no more shrinkings, no more fears, if not while in the body, and on the natural plane, it will be when the hour of ascension and perfectness of being comes to me.

XIII.

The Inner Circle.

Last evening, I listened to an *interesting* lecture on "The Philosophy of Inspiration," and particularly so to me, bringing to my perception an increased degree of enjoyment in the inspirations of the present time, and especially those I have witnessed in others, and which have come to me from time to time for many years past. Truly God does not leave his children without witness of His presence; inspiring thoughts and emotions, adapted to each one's state and power of receptivity, connecting thus the spirit of man closely with the Spirit of the Infinite.

Ezekiel's vision of the wheels is full of instruction; the circle in which the creature moves with God never divergent; the angels whose wings touch, and whose faces turn towards each other—of equal heights and proportions—they move only in the Divine order or sphere,

and so swiftly, the movement is well represented by wings.

The life which surpasses all other life raises them up and carries them forward, and thus they are always in the Divine order.

This sphere of love has reached me. I am surrounded with the atmosphere of God. God is everywhere perceived, within and without. I inhale His breath or life, and am as free as the birds of heaven. My spirit knows no bounds. But the house I live in, the earthly tabernacle, has form and limitations, and is subject to the order of the natural plane, and I find not my heaven here complete; I have the foretaste, but not the full enjoyment.

It is good discipline to conform to the earth-limitations; to know that I have wings, and yet cannot fly until God severs the string that binds me to the earth-body. And knowing in my inward being what heaven is, I can afford to wait the appointed time of release; and especially since my mission is so blessed, to be the disburser of Love to the weary pilgrims.

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Such have been my experiences of the heavenly state, involving so much of discipline on the natural plane, on account of my relations with the external and lower plane of life, the cross seeming heavier even, as I advance, and yet the joy is in such proportion to its weight, that I would say to each disciple, be content with the present; bear willingly the cross of today, and know if thou dost advance higher up thou canst not put off thy cross by so doing; it will change its form, but its weight will not be diminished.

The way of ascent is by the way of the cross, and the joy is in proportion to the sacrifice.

Yesterday was to me a day of suffering—enjoyment, terms apparently contradictory, nevertheless the experience is a reality. I am coming more and more to see the propriety and beauty of the unfolding of the flower-bud of my interior youth and virginity to the warmth of the Bridegroom's sunlight, and to the dew and the rains, softening and relaxing and causing my spirit to be dissolved and to flow into the universal Life of God. At present I am shut up to the *Now*, without inquiry, without anxiety.

XIV.

What is Heaven?

The query arises, what is heaven; or the state of happiness which may be called heaven? There are many heavens, each one having his own heaven. Thus the heaven in man differs as state and inclinations differ. To know what man loves best, or what his love is, is to know his heaven; he carries his heaven within himself. The miser's heaven is gold. Each one has his love, in the indulgence of which love he finds his heaven or happiness. This is the heaven of the natural man, *self-indulgence,* in some of its varied forms.

A great astronomer-poet of Persia, who lived in the eleventh century, wrote:

"I sent my soul through the Invisible,
Some lesson of that after life to spell;
And by and by my soul returned to me,
And answered, *I myself* am heaven or hell."

These lines read us a great lesson. Yes, heaven or hell are found within

us, and in our mixed state there is a strife or conflict, until the natural man yields to the wonder-working power of the Divine Spirit.

What is the heaven of the man of God? or, in other words, where or how shall I find heaven? Answer—I have reached the heaven I am prepared by the grace of God to enjoy, viz., the love and enjoyment of God in His works and ways, as inwardly and outwardly revealed to me. The knowledge I have reached of God as Supreme is my heaven. He alone satisfies the wants of my soul. Having thus reached God, I have come to the end of my limited selfish being, and am expanding in God's fullness. Grace, mercy and peace are being multiplied to me, according to my necessities. God is being known interiorly as the God of my life; the Inspirer of thought and emotion; as the inward and outward manifestation of what I am, and what I shall be in the future. Thus God is my heaven, His will, my law of being. He is the beginning and the end of all my desires, plans

and purposes. All within me rallies and converges to this one centre. It is thus I have reached the end of my creation, and have no existence separate from and independent of God. This is my heaven, and the only true and real heaven which is soul-satisfying. To come home to God is rest and peace and life; this is the heaven of heavens, or the highest heaven; for all God's laws are good, and when the soul thus reaches God, it finds the blessedness resulting from the operation of perfect laws in his own being, and regarding the universe of being—regarding man and things created.

To find God, then, is to find heaven, the only heaven which can answer the demands of our being; for God alone, who has created the soul, knows how to supply its wants. Cowper long ago said, looking up to the stars: "My Father made them all." Thus all the universe is given to the child of God to enjoy. And the greatest enjoyment of all will be found in beholding the image and likeness of the Father in His children, each one being to the other a fountain of

blessedness, and all proceeding from the infinite fullness of inexhaustible Deity. Is not this heaven enough? Shall we ask or desire any other heaven than what God has made us capable of receiving in being one with each other and one with God?

XV.

The Divine Order.

I well remember how strangely these words, "The Divine Order," struck my ear, as I heard them repeated by a Christian friend some years since. I had often noticed these words of our Lord: "My time is not yet," and had received the idea that the Son of God was in waiting on his Father's will; or, in other words, fulfilling all prophecy in the course of events, or in the divine order.

With the rush and impetuosity of the natural man I am well acquainted from experience and observation. The lesson of waiting, or following the divine order, has been a hard lesson, and a point of severe discipline the last years. And I think it will be found a place of great difficulty to all who enter into very close relations with God, and with one another; for to come into unity with God is to come into unity with one another.

"That they may be one, even as we are one."

The union which God establishes between souls is very clearly a union of *life,* proceeding *from* and *in* Himself; and being of the same quality, naturally commingling as stream flows into stream where there are no obstructions.

The eternal spiritual life cannot make haste because it is eternal; *has* existed and *will* exist forever; and this life operating in us must and will partake of God's qualities, and will be operative, more or less, in His time and way, necessarily flowing *in* and flowing *out* from us, more or less, as there are channels open to receive it. This is God's economy of grace, so to speak.

"He answered them not a word," and again He opened his mouth, and words, effective words, were uttered. It is of no avail for the child of God to go where he has no errand, no purpose God-given. Waiting on God, he finds his true mission in the right time. It is on account of the superabundance of self-activities that the child of God

cannot determine the will of his Father. There is much of this giant religion of self-activity operating, and therefore so little is understood of the divine order, or doing things in the right way and time, and successfully.

To determine the leadings of the Spirit has always been a point of great difficulty with me; and the reason of this I now perceive quite clearly is owing to the activities of the natural man. When the whole mind is brought into closer union with God, the eye is clearer, and the Life of God flows in less interruptedly and less consciously, too, and one acts without acting, that is, without a distinct prompting, or revelation, or impulse; the act or the word flows out quietly and naturally and unconsciously as to the power of the word spoken. The life, the power is operative without demonstration. "He spake and it was done."

Little by little the *word* comes to me in its clearness. Truths glanced at years ago now fix my eye steadfastly, and there is no diverging from them. My

progress has seemed slow, but I may say sure; and when I have once reached a point I have not receded, because light and more light has been shed on the same truth, and thus I see clearly and *know* the Truth; and I must add, the Truth makes me free.

XVI.

Individual Prophecy.

A fact of great interest to me at the present time is this: the fulfillment of *individual* prophecy, or, in other words, the coming to pass, or full confirmation of the Spirit's teachings, by an experience years subsequently of those truths, or of the very things revealed to us. It is said of the Spirit of Truth, "he shall shew you things to come." And when things take place that have been announced to us years previously, all doubts that may have arisen concerning the source of these prophesyings vanish, and we know the Spirit of Truth has been the Teacher, or Revealer of things to come.

It is said, false prophets shall arise. This has been and will be. We cannot receive too humbly and too cautiously inward teachings and revelations concerning the mysteries of the kingdom. There are truths very obvious which are

fundamental, and concerning which he that runs may read. And there are also truths deeply hidden, and which will be forever hidden from the perception of those who are wise and prudent in their own eyes. Nevertheless, these truths are revealed to babes, weak and small in their own eyes, and having a single eye towards God. It is only in the abandonment and nothingness of self that we are led up higher into the Infinite, and to an experience of the glory which Christ had with the Father before the world was. And He has said: "The glory which Thou hast given me, I have given them." It is the farther inward revelation, perception, and experience of higher truths, that so enriches the heart of the child of God, making heaven a present possession, or at least giving us a rich foretaste of what is to come in the soul's history.

Enoch, of ancient times, walked with God three hundred years. And in the course of this long journey it would be strange if he had not advanced step by step to closer and closer intimacy with

the Father of his spirit. A wise parent gives to his child such food as he can digest, and will promote his strength. Thus our Father leads His children step by step, and each lesson is of great value in its place, and necessary to be learned thoroughly before another lesson can be profitably received. It is a great thing to act up to, or according to the light we have received. And until this is done there is no further light given, or advancement made. If so it would be wasted, the manna would become corrupt, it would do us no good, and therefore it is withheld. "In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," to be dealt out as a wise father teaches and develops his child, viz., in the way of trust and loving obedience to His will as manifested day by day.

XVII.

Rest After Conflicts.

I have been in great perplexity of late regarding the dealings of God with me. But all now is well. The *all* of the creature seems so subject to the Divine will that there remains, at least, seemingly now, no will, no purpose, no choice; everything seems equal in the will of God. This is the beginning of a new experience, which I am to know more of hereafter. I can think of no term which so well expresses it, as the word *Rest*—rest from all internal conflicts. I do not seek submission, I have it. Nothing in me of the active creature, or self-will remains to trouble me at the present time; there is no friction, no counter currents. The powers and faculties of the soul are all there, ready to be put into action from a Divine source, and I am the same being in this respect, but O how changed! The change seems to be a removal of those spiritual, internal

influences, or lower grades of spirits, which have had access to me. This rallying of interior spiritual enemies, or forces, which has caused me so much suffering, has been very perplexing and trying. And here I may say that in the onward march of Self-will to death, the last struggles are more severe than the conflicts preceding. But in each advance to death—the death of Self-will, there has been compensation. No evil goes out, but a higher good comes in. Thus one is kept from a despairing state; is conscious of being God-sustained, and is hopeful of great good ultimately, when the victory over Self-will is gained. The last two years have been the most trying and the most blessed of my life. Trying, because the least understood, baffling all my skill and wisdom; and submission, unqualified submission, has been the only point of rest. There must always be a tender point reached, when one gives up all to God. But what blessedness follows!

XVIII.

How God is best known.

The work of originating, planning, laboring, all that relates to reasoning, imagination and storing up of ideas, is completed in me. I find great victory over these mental conditions. My spirit disencumbered, returns to God who gave it. Revelations of truth are given in God's time. On my part it is only to be silent and let God do all. Like the bird of the air, I float on the surface of passing events, taking what God in His providence provides, building my nest only in the Heart of Love—Love divine—never doubting God's watchful care over me, or at least I am approaching this state of complete rest in God, and am enjoying much of it at the present time. I seem to myself like one who has been for a long time, yea, in all the past, living in a darkened room, seeing things obscurely, but is just now coming out into broad daylight, seeing with God's eye.

The last few years have been fruitful in changes of my interior condition, and changes I never expected to meet, and yet my individuality is preserved. I am myself still, and not another, but I am ground, ground, ground in the mill. I see now very clearly the imperfections of my past mental conditions, my prejudices and prepossessions and vain imaginations. To get rid of all has been a great work, and accomplished little. I speak now with a good deal of assurance, that much has been accomplished by the work of the Spirit in my interior being, and through such means as God has provided. I have now no fears of becoming contaminated by sin in any of its forms (and this is saying a great deal for me), although I may suffer from coming into contact with it, through the persons of others, as today my head ached from listening to one, a *great man,* on the darkened plane of reasoning. Darkness, self-delusion was over all his spirit, and his sphere was strong. How can God reach a soul who in the pride of his own reason utterly rejects Him?

How happy I am in communing with such as have the Life of God within, who find God everywhere, but most of all interiorly, in the secret recesses of the soul. I seem to myself to be done with all but God in the present manifestations of His will to me. True, some moments are more blissful than others, but living in His presence, all is made good to me. I now reckon myself an innocent, pure child, at home in my Father's house. Alas! how slow have I been to reach fixedly this position.

XIX.

The Life-Giving Word.

In my present state, I do not experience those distinct acts of faith for myself or others, which were appropriate to a previous condition. The good now accomplished by me is by the power of the Word—the life-giving Word. If the word uttered by me is not operative, nothing is accomplished. "He spake and it was done." "They spake as the Spirit gave them utterance." In my present state, it is important to observe much silence, for it is only in silence that place is given for the utterance of the Word. There are many thoughts I utter in accommodation to others on the natural plane, which have only a natural signification. Thus there are two kinds of speech, the natural and the spiritual or divine. One may look for these spiritual, divine utterances, only when in a condition ready to receive them. It is then *The Word* speaking, which is, and

was, and will be. There is a point of distinction, important to be observed, between the Eternal Word and myself. I am finite, and on the natural plane, but besides the natural I have a holy, spiritual development, bringing me into close relations with God, or the Word, which is God. The *"holy spiritual,"* which is within me, cannot well be located or defined. It exists and manifests itself in expression some way, either in thought, word or act. In my present condition, it is always present where I am. This is enough for me to know, whether I see, or do not see, the manifestation. We are in a similar relation to God as Jesus was. God is the dispenser of His own life. This life is His gift, and should always be thus recognized. This life has limitations in us, is subject to God's order, acting according to His laws, the creature or created, always remaining finite. Angels of the highest order, as well as man, move in the divine orbit. We are not created "Gods," only in a limited sense, as bearing His image, although we may sometimes speak authoritatively, or with

power, as of God the Word, speaking through us. When rightly understood, the same language Jesus used, that is, when the Word speaks, is appropriate to us, or may be so, in certain conditions to which one is speaking; but always recognizing that the finite is subject to the Infinite. This is the truth of God. And it sets my mind at rest concerning the individuality and subjection of man as created, to the supremacy of God as Creator, to whatever heights and depths one may reach.

XX.

A Broad Place.

Am I not come into the heavenly rest, which I interpret to be *living in God*, or in His will? And is there anything more to be reached? God *within* me! God *without!* God in the good, and God in the evil, at least in the sense of permitting it as the result of violated holy laws. I acquiesce in it, yea more, receive it as being good to me, at least in its results.

Thus, on every side I am surrounded by the Infinite, and live *in* and *of* God as the birds of the air. He gives me my habitation. He arranges my work. He instructs my thought. He awakens desire, and lets desire cease. Thus is God inward and outward, and all around me; and as much so according to my capacity or power for receiving Him, as He ever will be. God is here. God is everywhere.

What I do not possess fully at the

present moment, I have in anticipation, and thus there is always something inspiring, something anticipated in the right time and order of God. I have nothing to fear. If I live in the body I live unto the Lord. If I die, or leave the body, I am still with the Lord. Thus life and death are equal; and joy and sorrow, sickness and health are alike good.

This is a broad place—ocean broad—world-wide broad—eternity broad—broad as Infinity! My external form finds a locality here and there, but my thought is everywhere.

And my emotions, what shall I say of them? They were never so much a study as in the past summer. There is a new fountain opened—a fountain of sorrow! *Within* me, shall I say? And yet in some sense external—a fountain near by at least—a fountain of sorrow because I am alone in the external world. My companion is removed in bodily presence. His voice no longer answers to mine. And sometimes, in the keen perception of this changed condition, the emotions of

sorrow almost overwhelm me for a time, until I find relief in entire forgetfulness of the absent one. Thus the waves of sorrow roll over me, but they leave me, and often as suddenly as they came, and I find myself still anchored in God.

I am understanding more clearly than ever my emotional nature as distinct from thought or perception. When heaved by sorrow (or remorse, of which I know little), it is terrible in its power. And when pleasurable emotions are excited in the heavenly or pure soul, how great is the transport, how lofty the reach of blessedness! These emotions of sorrow must cease. Time and all its appendages will give place to eternal blessedness in the soul's onward progress. I can well conceive of states of absolute rest or passivity, and state of fulness of joy in heaven, but no state of sorrow, for inspiration says: "God *himself* shall wipe away all tears."

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